

53% success rate in finding matching products made by U.S. manufacturers

The National Institute of Standards and Technology's (NIST) Hollings Manufacturing Extension Partnership (MEP) works with small and mid-sized U.S. manufacturers to help them create and retain jobs, increase profits, and save time and money. The nationwide network provides a variety of services, from innovation strategies to process improvements to green manufacturing. MEP also works with partners at the state and federal levels on programs that put manufacturers in position to develop new customers, expand into new markets, and create new products.

Supplier Scouting, a component of NIST MEP's Technology Acceleration strategy, is designed to bring business opportunities to small U.S. manufacturers with specific capabilities and capacities. In response to the supply chain needs of federal agency and original equipment manufacturer (OEM) partners, MEP leverages its vast knowledge of local manufacturer capabilities to identify and pre-qualify supplier capabilities and capacities, and provide assistance to suppliers as needed.

Buy American Supplier Scouting is a collaboration of federal agencies and MEP to scout for U.S. manufacturing capabilities to support the Buy American Provisions of federal funding programs, including projects funded by the American Reinvestment and Recovery Act (ARRA). The provision generally states that, subject to certain exceptions, when appropriated funds purchase manufactured goods for use in certain federally-funded projects, those goods must be manufactured in the U.S.

Collaborating with federal agencies, MEP developed processes that leverage its network of manufacturing specialists in all 50 states and Puerto Rico to explore the U.S. manufacturing landscape in search of specific American made products needed for projects that are subject to Buy American provisions. When project awardees have difficulty satisfying the Buy American provisions – typically because they are unaware of American companies that can make the products they need – they submit waiver requests to their federal funding agency. MEP's role is reviewing the requested waived items, and finding suitable U.S. made products.

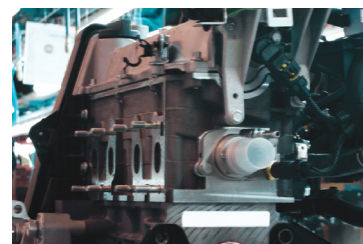
Pilot collaborations with the U.S. Department of Energy's Office of Energy Efficiency and Renewable Energy (DOE EERE) show the MEP Buy American Supplier Scouting program works. As of December 2011, MEP found exact or partial product matches for 53% of waivers submitted. Of those matched, collaborating agencies deemed 54% as viable U.S. suppliers and declined the waiver requests to produce those items abroad. MEP is also in the process of expanding the program on a larger scale with other federal efforts such as the U.S. Department of Transportation's Next Generation Rail Program.

MEP is also operating other Supplier Scouting projects with other federal agencies and OEMs, including the Defense Logistics Agency, Naval Air Systems Command, and Department of Veterans Affairs. These efforts focus on leveraging the MEP network to find small- and medium-sized U.S. manufacturers who can solve difficult supply chain and procurement issues facing the federal agency and OEM partners. MEP Supplier Scouting assistance includes:

- Connecting potential suppliers with agency and OEM procurement sources
- Assisting manufacturers with product expansion and/or alterations for additional uses
- Product reverse engineering to produce necessary technical data for production

For more information, contact NIST MEP:

Carroll Thomas • carroll.thomasmartin@nist.gov • (301) 975-5031



Feb 2012